

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 86
By McCord

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Blount County
Commissioner Richard Williams, Jr.

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Blount County Commissioner Richard Williams, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Richard Williams, Jr., was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams served the good people of Blount County with honor and distinction, and he earned the respect of his constituents for the exemplary quality of his work and his unswerving dedication to the greater good; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams was the second African-American to be elected to office in Blount County in the twentieth century, and the third African-American elected official in the history of the county; and

WHEREAS, Born in Blount County, Commissioner Williams was educated in the segregated public schools of Alcoa; having graduated from Charles M. Hall High School in 1951, he matriculated at the Fort Gordon (Georgia) Military Academy of Leadership; and

WHEREAS, After graduating with honors from the military academy, Commissioner Williams served his country in the military police from 1953 until 1955; and

WHEREAS, After completing his military service, he returned to Blount County, where he accepted a position with the United States Department of Energy Courier Service in 1973; he received three performance awards for professionalism before he retired in 1982; and

WHEREAS, During his exemplary tenure as a Blount County Commissioner, Richard Williams, Jr., was a member of the county's Millenium Committee, and played an active role in the design and adoption of the Blount County flag; he also served on the Blount County Heritage Museum Committee, in which position he worked to establish a museum to showcase the history of Blount County; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams also worked with purpose and devotion to establish a greenway trails system in the county; he had recently accepted, on behalf of the county, a donation of land from ALCOA which will be used to establish a park to link the walking trails of Maryville and Alcoa; and

WHEREAS, Perhaps the most treasured responsibility of his elected position was performing marriages, especially on Valentine's Day, for he was grateful for the opportunity to "touch families, be a part of families, and never be forgotten;" and

WHEREAS, Wearing the large Stetson hat that was his trademark, Commissioner Williams delivered a brief message about faith, fidelity, and responsibility as part of the wedding ceremony; and

WHEREAS, During his career, Commissioner Williams was honored many times. He was listed in "Who's Who Among Black Americans"; he was honored by Omega Psi Phi as a Friend of Education in East Tennessee; he received the Blount County Soil Conservation District Outstanding Leadership Award; he was named to the 2001 *Daily Times* Alumni Wall of Fame; and he was honored by Governor Don Sundquist with the Tennessee Volunteer Commendation Award of 2002; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams was an active and devout member of the St. John Baptist Church of Alcoa, which he served faithfully for many years as a Sunday School teacher and member of the Board of Deacons; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his meritorious service in elected office, Commissioner Williams also served his community as a member of the Alcoa Rotary Club and the American Legion, Post 13; he was Past Master of Granite Masonic Lodge No. 289, Past Commander in Chief of Alcoa Consistory No. 175, and Past Potentate of Almas Shrine Temple No. 71, and had been named Mason of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams enjoyed the loving companionship of Evelyn Robinson Williams, his wife of more than forty years, their daughter and son-in-law, Vivian and Cameron Love, and his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; he looked to the love he received from his parents, the late Richard and Gertrude Jones Williams, and his brothers and sisters, as a model for his own family; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Williams leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and devotion in all his chosen endeavors; throughout his life he remained dedicated to this worthy goal: "Let me live in my house by the side of the road and be a friend to man;" and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and compassionate human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Commissioner Richard Williams, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character as a community leader and role model for African-Americans and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Commissioner Williams.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.